

September 1, 2020

Everett Planning Commission

Thanks to the Planning Commission for all you are doing on this extremely complicated effort. I do not envy staff on the effort they are trying to accomplish during this difficult time. I have been following the process and provided my first comments in August 2019. Much of the information has come out in the last month or two and has taken a lot of time to review.

The Planning Commission has many exceedingly difficult decisions to make about the Rethink Zoning effort before you. In reflection, the effort is much more than a zoning effort as it is titled. The effort changes the ordinances for the Historic Commission, SEPA rules, subdivision standards, road and utility standards, shoreline master program, comprehensive plan and perhaps more which I have not listed here. Before you act, you should be truly clear on what you are voting on and how it will affect the citizens and property owners in Everett. The complex code before you have a lot of changes which I am not sure why they are being made and if they are improvements to the code. In some cases, I do not think they are improvements. They are so complicated that staff cannot summarize some of the changes to citizens, property owners, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Examples are it was requested that staff provide a summary of the changes to notice requirements and where there are changes to who makes decisions. They could not provide this information in a summary format. This is important to know so you understand what you are being asked to recommend to the City Council. I think you should take your time and be deliberate in your review of the comments provided to you.

I will repeat here some of my comments.

- Reducing information to citizens is not a desired approach to administration of the code. Citizens have good ideas and input which needs to be brought to the table. Do not reduce notice requirements. A couple of examples are the Historic Commission actions and SEPA actions.
- There is no good reason to change who makes the decisions. Planning Commission needs to be clear on the specifics of these changes before making a recommendation to Council. Do not change who currently makes decisions
- There needs to be a minimum lot size defined in the code. See my August 12 note for specific recommendations.
- The modification to how heights are measured needs to be removed from the proposed code. See my August 12 note for a specific recommendation.
- The merger clause needs to stay in the code. (Staff has recommended this change.)
- Make no changes to the SEPA rules, notice and posting requirements.
- Do not allow the very liberal modification process for standards including design, subdivision, and lot requirements. The language proposed basically does not create standards because is so extremely easy to modify them.

I am generally supportive of the comments made by Mary Cunningham, Mark Soine, Mark Wolken, and Patrick Hall and encourage you to take them into consideration as you deliberate.

I want to thank staff for their efforts. We have different opinions on items which are proposed. It is then up to you to review and then make a clear recommendation to the City Council with a knowledge that you understand what you are recommending.

Sincerely

David Koenig